(c) the measures proposed to help establish a domestic base to enhance exports of such tobacco products;

(d) whether any discussions were held with the exporting units and industry to strengthen tobacco exports; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The quantity and value of tobacco exported (product-wise) during the last four years is as follows:—

Qty. — MTs
Value — Crores

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96 (April—Feb.)
1. Unmanufactured Tobacco	(Q) 70607	90493	42930	61558
	(V) 355.57	368.26	184.13	284.60
2. Bidis, Cigars, Cherrots, Cigarillos, and Cigarettes	(Q) 4685	4416	2435	1745
	(V) 56.26	54.55	35.01	28.73
3. Hookah/Gooduku tobacco, Chewing tobacco, Jarda & Snuff	(Q) 12960	9768	8386	6710
	(V) 61.85	38.39	35.61	13.65

(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of tobacco include, inter-alia, reorientation of production of tobacco to meet changing international needs, enhancement of quality and productivity levels, monitoring and strict control of pesticide residues, aligning grading to international standards and permitting imports for product development.

(d) and (e) Tobacco Board is in constant touch with the industry to strengthen and enhance exports. Corrective actions are initiated to overcome bottlenecks in exports of tobacco as and when they arise.

Amendment to Payment of Gratuity Act

3334. **SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA:** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether by the amendment to the Payment of Gratuity Act the Estimated eight lakhs employees did actually get the benefit of the amendment;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps to be taken to ensure that the employees get the benefit of the Act?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) (b) and (d) Prior to 24-5-94 provisions of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 were not applicable to employees drawing wages exceeding Rs. 3500/- per month. The Act was amended on 24-5-94 and the above ceiling on wages for coverage under the Act was removed bringing thereby a number of employees within the purview of this Act. Provisions of this Act are enforced by the appropriate Government, in accordance with the relevant provisions.

(c) Does not arise.

इस्पात की उत्पादन लागत

3335. **श्री अनन्तराव देवशंकर दवेः**
श्री चिमनभाई हरिभाई शुक्लः

क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) क्या हमारे देश में इस्पात की उत्पादन लागत (कर सहित और कर रहित) अमरीका, जापान, ब्रिटेन, जर्मनी और दक्षिण कोरिया जैसे इस्पात उत्पादक देशों की उत्पादन लागत की तुलना में कम है;